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JANUARY 1955
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HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER

COMMUNITY

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Editorial

TWO ladies on the bus were talking; the one telling glowingly all about her daughter's moving into a new suburban development. "And best of all everyone's so friendly. Not like our old neighborhood where you could drop dead and no one would notice. Why there if you need any help at night you switch your outdoor light on and everyone comes running."

It was a simple conversation but it was to me a reminder that when we paint in dark shades the modern lack of community, we should remember that here and there for the contemporary scene we can use lighter, brighter hues. Young people whose parents were rugged individualists are discovering new values in co-operation. Where the previous generation chose the glamor and anonymity of big city life, some of the younger generation are recognizing the importance of living in a place where one is *known*.

This sense of *belonging* is of the essence of community. Yet an exact definition of community is hard to come by. We recognize community when it is present; we know when it is absent; but what exactly community *is* is difficult to say.

In his recent perspicacious analysis of the American character, *People of Plenty*, David Potter points to the fact that the much-vaunted American freedom to improve our lot in life has backfired. People who rejoiced that they could get ahead in the world, now sense dejectedly that they have no place in the world—that is, no special status, no sense of function. The humble craftsman of a former era who felt at home in his community, who was aware of his role there (even though it remained a static one) had a contentment denied the modern American who pays the price of "chance for advancement" in psychological insecurity. The intangible goods of community have only too often been sacrificed to material prosperity.

The contributors to this issue all look at the idea of community from different angles. It is a complex subject and they cannot cover it exhaustively. We hope to devote future issues to the parish as a community, and to the problem technology poses to the development of a sense of community in work life. We invite our readers' comments.

Group Action Versus Individualism

by ED WILLOCK

*Why isn't there a sense of
community in American life?
Are Catholics too individualistic?*

We simply cannot breeze into the subject of "community" and expect fellow members of the machine age to know what we're driving at. They have the notion that community was a medieval, pre-industrial thing (which, in a sense, is true) and then they go on to conclude erroneously that it has no more to do with 1954 than Eric the Red's mustache.

It's very hard to talk sense when we're talking about something that isn't there. We sound like a nearsighted bloke describing a mirage! But that is precisely all that is generally noted about community these days: *it isn't there!* Popes and scholars note its absence in academic terms. They speak of the "lack of human solidarity," "de-humanized wage-earners," the "depersonalization" and "mechanization" of the home and of society, the "lack of rapport" between the individual and his society. I am thinking especially of Pius XII's Christmas message of 1952, and the survey made by UNESCO showing the disappearance of community life from industrial society (these, of course, are a small fraction of what's been written on the subject).

From all the scholarly writing we might get the impression that community is an esoteric subject of little practical import to the average man. That's where we're wrong! Few things are of more practical importance—that is, if we look upon such things as juvenile delinquency, endemic mental disorder, and growing criminality as practical problems. Without denying the presence of a moral element of personal sin in these happenings, we should realize that a social disorder, "a lack of community," is a contributing factor of tremendous significance.

The personal problem. Since it is our habit as individualists to diagnose and treat all disorders on an individual level, the "lack of community" can most easily be revealed by noting a psychological disturbance characteristic of modern industrial man.

Since this disorder varies in intensity all the way from a marked discontent and minor neurosis to advanced abnormality and psychosis, it is difficult to find a word to describe it aptly. The best description of the malady seems to be "a loss of the sense of belonging."

The most obvious symptom is a condition known as "alienation," a desire to be something other than what we are. This chronic loneliness, boredom, and discontent is a malady not limited to mental institutions or clinics but is apparent in everyday life. An insatiable desire to be somewhere else, manifested by our endless motor traveling and our moving our homes from place to place, is a symptom of our endless search for a place where we belong. The desire to be entertained always by television, radio, movies, and novels evidences our boredom and longing to escape from ourselves. Vicarious heroics, such as are found in spectator sports, reveal our deep-seated desire to be other than what we are.

Some aberrations are to be expected. Role-playing, for example, is characteristic of teen-agers in every age. Today, however, these flights of fancy are of daily occurrence. The individual is rarely "at home" in today's world. He is never more than fractionally committed to the demands of the realities about him. He grows ever more attached to a make-believe world in which he can imagine himself reincarnated as a being far more dramatically endowed than the creature he seems to be on the subway.

In the face of this situation the two greatest deterrents to a concerted effort to revive community are these: 1) The notion generally held by Christians (and often their religious leaders) that the damage done to personality by an inhuman society can be corrected on the individual level, either through transcendence or adjustment. 2) The conventional belief that the attitude known as "individualism" is to be admired, whereas such an attitude is fundamentally immoral, inhuman, and essentially anti-Christian.

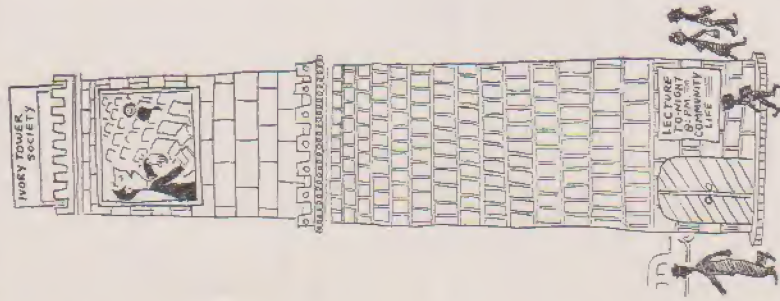
Two schools. First of all there seem to be two schools of thought on what constitutes a true Christian life. On the one hand, it is generally held that holiness is a matter exclusively concerning the individual and God; on the other, the social encyclicals of the Vicar of Christ appear to have added a new dimension to conscientious responsibility, known as social responsibility. I do not wish to imply that prior to *Rerum Novarum* the second commandment, "Love thy neighbor," was overlooked, but certainly

the teachings of the modern Popes have cast considerably more light on the mode of operation and disposition of conscience required to make this commandment effective.

The modern Popes have been cognizant of the fact that the common man today (unlike his forebears) is in a position, *through group action*, to affect sizeably the common good. Since he has this new ability the Popes, as his authorized spiritual directors, have pointed out that he now has a new responsibility. The realization of this new potential simply cannot be explained in individualistic terms and consequently has escaped the generality of Catholics. Aquinas tells us that "the individual, as such, has no responsibility for the common good." At a time when men were "subjects" of rulers if a penitent were to ask his spiritual advisor, "How best may I serve the common good?" he would be advised simply: "Obey your superior." If authoritarian government were the rule today as it was in the middle ages, the same advice would suffice.

Why did Leo XIII address his recommendation to "reorganize the social order" to the laity as a whole? Why not simply ask the rulers (as was done when monarchy prevailed)? Because he and his successors have perceived the new initiative available to the common man in free societies where the rights of election, petition and association are recognized.

Singly a man can do no more now about social injustice, war and poverty than he could have done under a monarchy. Free society and popular government now make possible *organized group effort* which can truly affect the common good. No longer can a conscientious Catholic assuage his conscience with the question: "What more can I, as an individual, do about social injustice?" There is another question: "What



more can *we* do?" There obviously is a moral responsibility which is not simply *individual* but a *shared* responsibility. Failure to grasp this point has thrown Catholics into opposing camps. Some feel a moral responsibility to join movements where group effort is expended to reorganize the social order. Others look upon these group activities as presumptuous, busy-body, disruptive manifestations operating wholly apart from the demands of conscience.

It seems to me if a Catholic carefully reads the social teachings of our modern Popes, he will feel obliged to join some group actively concerned with social reform. Groups may be as widely divergent in methods as the Catholic Worker and the Christian Family Movement, or as different in aims as the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and the Legion of Mary, but they will all be exercising responsibilities beyond the scope of the individual. An urge to participate in some such activity seems a normal consequence of taking the Popes' messages seriously. On the other hand, if one wishes to exercise his individuality, and "go it alone" so to speak, he must carefully avoid the social encyclicals, look to the spiritual guides of an earlier age for his soul's direction, and seek solace in the thought that when he has done all that he can individually do his responsibility is ended.

Individualism. American commentators and journalists (whether of the faith or not), when dealing with the social message of the Pope, have headlined his condemnations of isms which we choose to regard as foreign, while at the same time they have ignored or reduced to fine print his judicious criticism of rugged individualism. Although our native brand of individualism has lost much of its ruggedness since 1929 (thanks especially to the "enlightenment" policy forced upon industry by an irate labor movement), it still continues to be normal operating procedure in the social area. It is still general policy for each citizen to seek assiduously after what he considers to be his own, while the general welfare is left pretty much to government agencies. Organized group endeavors toward social betterment are still looked at suspiciously and the individual is loathe to sacrifice any energy, time, or sleep over problems other than his own. We still teach our children to "excel" and to compete. We generally admire ambition and diligence when exercised in one's own behalf, but the same zeal exercised in a group "cause," without immediate profit to the individual, is regarded with scorn. Although the doc-

trines of the original philosophers of individualism have been more or less forgotten, their threads continue to trace the pattern of our social fabric.

The French Jesuit, Henri de Lubac, reminds us in his first chapter of *Catholicism* that hyper-individualism was recognized, especially by the early Fathers of the Church, as the "mark" left by original sin. The disintegration of human personality, which resulted after the fall, turned each individual nature into a "core of opposition." When Cain killed his brother Abel (thus becoming the patron of all individualists), his was an act of rebellion against the whole human community. He rejected the limitations placed upon individual action made necessary by the demands of family, fraternity and community. His rejection of community was expressed in his brazen, "Am I my brother's keeper?" To answer this question in the affirmative is to establish oneself as a communitarian, a personality who finds his fulfillment as partner in the common life of his fellows. Cain phrased his question in individualistic terms, implying "Am I individually responsible for my brother?" Original sin had blinded him to the *mutuality* of human interdependence.

How to revive community. The rationalization and practice of community is complex and difficult, for it is the most challenging and demanding of all the arts. For individualists it is impossible; they haven't the capacity for it. The philosophy of individualism is far too simple, far too lacking in the nuances of personal relations to cope with the demands of community. The individualist's repertoire of social maneuvers is pretty much limited to two strategic moves. The first and most cultivated maneuver is: "Mind your own business." This solves almost any social crisis the individualist may come upon. The second (reserved for "desperate" situations) is called upon only when the individualist inadvertently and in disregard of his first tenet has become involved. It is usually expressed simply: "I quit!" The individualist, like Napoleon, always plans his retreat before he becomes engaged. He generally treasures his "rain-check," gives lengthy consideration to the "resale value" of anything he contracts to buy.

If a confirmed individualist in an excess of enthusiasm plunges into a group activity, more than likely he will find himself unable to swim. To be truly a "social being" requires a magnanimity and a generosity of spirit that the individualist finds

utterly foreign. The basic difficulty is that the individualist has been schooled in the shrewd tactic of forever defending and preserving his sovereignty. Community demands that this sovereignty be sacrificed. The group as a whole will only grow in effectiveness and prestige to the degree that each member sacrifices his own autonomy. Such a sacrifice is inconceivable for the individualist. That is why family life (the simplest community) gradually becomes anemic in a society of individualists.

If it is so difficult, and since we have all been raised as individualists, what possibility is there of realizing community? There is one ray of hope in an otherwise bleak vista. Individualism and Catholicism are utterly incompatible. Every Catholic is a potential communitarian. Individualism is completely foreign to the Mass and the Sacraments. The tension in the souls of today's Catholics comes from the strain of trying to reconcile these incompatibles. Proper participation at Mass presupposes that we love our neighbor as intensely as we love ourselves, while on the other hand proper participation in today's society (if we accept the premises upon which its institutions are founded) demands a jealous commitment to our own self-interest and a studied avoidance of unprofitable personal sacrifice.

The Mass. The primary step in the revival of community, therefore, is the *living* of the Mass. The participant at the Mass—when he consciously worships, studiously absorbs the instruction, fervently communicates, in this one Great Social Act—is experiencing community at its utmost intensity. The only remaining problem is to make what is here *intense*, extensive in his daily affairs. This act of extension should be a group activity also. If at all possible, we Catholics should participate in group efforts to re-Christianize the affairs with which we are daily preoccupied. There are now in existence vocational associations of all sorts, designed to make Christ an active participant in the daily life and social habits of each member of that profession. If these Catholic associations appear to be ineffective, if they tend to become inbred, if they seem to be exclusive and slightly lunatic, the main reason is because those persons who might add dimension and artistry to their efforts prefer to remain critically aloof, and adamantly individual.

Conclusion. Only a minority of Catholics are convinced that any kind of organized group action is required in order to

Christianize the community. Most will agree with those American Catholic leaders who hold that "as a concession to the individualism of Americans, it is foolish to hope that lay apostolicity here can adapt itself to the 'cell' and group techniques that have proved so effective among Catholics in Europe."

While I'm ready to agree that one must allow for and be patient with the historical fact of individualism, and that foreign techniques should not be imported, lock, stock and barrel, I think it utterly unwise to make so sweeping a concession to indigenous individualism. Individualism is precisely the evil which makes Christian community impossible! Isolated, individual acts of virtue, however admirable, cannot hope to affect seriously social mores which have been planted and are nurtured by scrupulously organized forces of secular individualism. Organized group action is the only strategy that can educate individualists in the art of human relations while they are engaged in the co-operative endeavor of encouraging togetherness in Christ.

SEEDS OF THE DESERT

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Rene Voillaume

Introduction by John La Farge, S.J.

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Workshop In Love

by SISTER MARIEL, S.S.S.

*An account of one group's investigation
of the problem of loving one another.*

In the course of parish visiting I had become alarmed to the point of desperation by the conspicuous absence of charity within parish organizations. Even between these organizations, all working for the common goal of God's glory and the good of the parish, existed a rivalry incompatible with Christian love. Too frequently, sincere and zealous persons told me that they had dropped out of this group or that because they were frozen out by dominating cliques. Early Christians had been known by obvious love for one another. It was apparent that we Catholics did not even like one another. Our enemies, I reflected, are united by hate. Why can't we recapture our original union of love?

With some misgivings I called together seven men and women from various parishes about town and put the problem before them. None of them had known each other prior to that evening. All of them, I knew, had three points in common: first, everyone was deeply in earnest about living the faith; second, everyone present had been hurt by rebuffs from fellow Catholics; third, due to these rebuffs, each had withdrawn from all Catholic lay activities. In the back of my mind I hoped that these individualistic, sensitive persons, all with qualities of leadership, would study this thing called Christian love and, strengthened by union of purpose and knowledge of why they did as they did, would infiltrate the very organizations they were now avoiding and "where there was no love, put love."

Investigating love. The small nucleus responded instantly, agreed at once we should form a little band of men and women who would explore for one year the underlying reasons for the lack of charity among Catholics. They chose the Holy Ghost for

patron and the doctrine of the Mystical Body for the backbone of their study. They would keep their discussions eminently practical, examining their own attitudes and conduct in the light of Christ's only command: Love thy neighbor! They would open their meetings, after prayer, with a brief summary of the liturgy for the week in order that the group might consciously experience together the union of living the year around the calendar with the Church.

Within a month we numbered fifteen. We closed the group at twenty. Men were fully as responsive as women to the purpose of the meetings. Of the twenty, twelve were men.

We stayed away from organization. We did not choose a name. We decided to be just what we were, Catholics, lay people, searching together for an answer to a question: How do I love my family, my neighbor, my business associates, my fellow Catholic in the pew beside me, those in authority, those under my authority, the stranger in the street, my non-Catholic friends, persons of another race and color, my brother Catholic in persecuted lands, the entire human race? To give pattern and order, every meeting would have a chairman who would appoint the chairman for the next meeting. The chairman's duties were to prepare a brief introduction to the topic chosen for discussion and, having launched the discussion, act as moderator for the evening.

End of the discussion club. The first four meetings can be forgotten as far as any significant findings are concerned. The amazing fact to everyone was that everyone came back! They came because of conviction that we had something if we could just get at it. But during the actual meetings we couldn't get at it! Caution was the keynote of every contribution. The essential requirement stipulated that each person speak personally. *How do I react to my daily situations that demand my charity of thought, word and deed?* What attitudes do I find in myself that need correcting? Few would speak this personally. All tended to hide behind platitudes and generalities. The discussions were halting, floundering, veering strongly to the impersonal. Suddenly, one whom I shall call Elvira, discovered for the others that this group was a miniature Mystical Body in itself. That was the beginning of change. The discussion club was to become a workshop.

It became a workshop when, during the fifth meeting, personality clashes were evident. Until now, these men and women

had been strangers to each other. They had met together four times and had sized each other up. After the fifth meeting, conversations with individuals in the group revealed to me that sensitive feelings had been hurt with and without cause. Marie phoned me. She could not abide the way Elvira monopolized every discussion. Elvira phoned. She never could trust small, quiet, dark women like Marie. A newcomer to the group, a man, told me that he had received too chilly a welcome to feel much like coming back. Another man who had been very vocal from the first, sulked throughout a meeting because Joe laughed out of turn. Joe, I knew, had laughed at something else, a side remark not related to the hurt one's words at all.

At the next meeting I gave a little speech. "Here we are, talking about love for an hour every week while, during the very discussion of charity, we are failing in it to each other. Do you think that here, in this model of the Mystical Body, we can discover what has gone wrong with Christian love in the whole, general Mystical Body?"

We look at ourselves. After a moment of silence, John, teacher of English in a public high school, said, "I think we are all afraid of each other. We are not giving credit to the next fellow to be as charitable as we, personally, are trying to be. We fear to speak from the heart because we fear to be misunderstood."

"That's human respect," stated Elvira, "and pride."

"It's fear of rejection, don't you think?" asked Bob.

"That's it!" cried Jane, "That's why I won't smile at another Catholic woman coming out of church if I don't know her. She might not smile back. She might think I am odd."

"Fear," said John, "makes us withdraw from one another. It leads to the laissez-faire attitude. I'll live my life and you lead yours. Don't bother me and I won't bother you. Isn't that essentially the attitude of paganism?"

"If we really loved for the love of God, it wouldn't matter to us if our positive acts of 'good will toward men' were rejected or not," added Lucy.

"Right here in this room, meeting for a determined purpose of learning about charity, we don't trust each other," said Jim. "Isn't that a reflection of our daily habit of life? We live, each one of us, with our guard up; surround ourselves with a wall. We will get no place in these discussions if we don't, right here, lower

our guard, break down the walls!"

"All right," said Elvira, "I'll begin. I think we are governed a good deal by unreasoned prejudices. For instance, I'm an extrovert. Introverts scare me to death—like you, Marie! You don't say much and I am always talking. I get to wondering, 'What is she thinking of what I say?' You frighten me like the mouse scares the elephant."

Marie smiled. "And I am overpowered by your type, Elvira. When you talk I am not thinking anything, usually. I'm just listening and wishing I could express myself as easily as you do."

Hal had a little black moustache. "Along that line," he interposed, "a lot of people don't trust men with small, black moustaches." For the rest of the hour the topic was fear, the paralyzing fear of rejection. The surface had been cracked and everyone dispersed feeling that progress had been achieved. For the remainder of the year, the faintest note of insincerity or superficiality was detected and routed.

"Loving my neighbor means loving Christ in him," a girl said once.

"Now what do you mean by that?" challenged another.

"Well, just what it says, loving Christ in the other person!"

"Do you? *Can* you? I can't! I mean it seems too strained, too artificial to me. I have to work at it so hard I don't think it is charity at all."

Someone else jumped in. "I feel the same way, too strained. I think that Jesus loved individual people for themselves, not for His own reflection in them. He valued them as persons. I think He loves *me* as a person." (Christ certainly does not love me only in the sense that He wants me for Himself but in the sense that He wants to give Himself to *me*.)

"If you *can* love Christ in another person, fine. But if you can't—and if you can love the person, value him for the human being that he is, I don't think you are so far off from real love."

(Of course, as members of the Mystical Body we love Christ in others, at least implicitly. But Christian love isn't a vague, impersonal love which imposes a supernatural blur on our natural feelings for people. Rather, as Christians our love is to remain full of human sympathy, aware of each particular person and his concrete needs, as well as his individual attractiveness.)

We took for discussion virtues related to, leading to, or

springing from love and spent an hour on each one: patience, trust, tact, hope, service, courtesy, dependability, cheerfulness, self-sacrifice, unselfishness—the homely, routine virtues that daily life begs us for. Priests visited our group from time to time. We asked one to speak on the prayers of the daily Missal, another to help us with portions of the Encyclical on the Mystical Body. Another helped us to understand love by speaking of the nature of hate. We steadfastly suppressed the inevitable urge to group *action*, insisting that the members concentrate on the practice of love in their individual environments.

Love demands doing. You cannot talk about love and practice love long without acting! One by one I watched them seek out further channels for "putting love where there is no love." A housewife with four children volunteered to teach catechism to our children in public schools. Then she rejoined the Mother's Club that had caused her so much resentment formerly. With the group, our group, behind her, she did not feel isolated in her resolute efforts to change the spirit of an organization that had defeated her own spirit before. One of the men started a similar "subversive" workshop in his own parish with the pastor's help. Two of the women began a planned but seemingly casual campaign on Sunday mornings after Mass. They would deliberately linger on the church steps, greeting friends they knew and introducing these friends to others of their acquaintance. And smiling!

But they had practiced it all within the group. We had long since discovered that a "host" or "hostess" was as necessary as a chairman for our meetings. Members arriving were met cordially at the door and, on leaving, were warmly told "Goodnight! See you next week!" We had learned to smile at each other first. We had learned in the meetings to encourage the shy ones, to assure each other of understanding. The vocal members had learned to draw out, in all charity, the timid. We had learned to trust men with small, black moustaches and small, quiet, dark-haired, silent women! We had learned to smooth off our sharp edges and blunt our bristles. The harmony of personalities, the consciously achieved harmony, was our greatest achievement in the workshop. And out of it, at home and in the office or school, it was not small achievement too! We had learned to be ready to love actively, positively, fearlessly.

Silence, Double Talk, or Better Understanding?

by ROLF LYNTON

*We no longer speak the same language.
As geographical distance shrinks,
social distance spreads.*

"Is the perch good tonight?"

"Everything we serve is good!"

I had stopped at a small roadside café for a bite to eat and had asked for the menu without first sitting down. Now the good lady of the house was indignant. Nothing could have been further from my intention than to make her indignant. I had meant to chat a little while I scanned the menu and while she waited for me to make up my mind to stay. I had even hoped to get from her the kind of hint with which many a hostess will happily, if obliquely, indicate what for some reason is a particularly good choice that day; if one is in the country, that is, and shows some interest and appreciation for culinary art. Instead I had offended her. I was someone to be put in his place; who was this young man to throw doubt on her cooking and the good name of the house!

I ordered the fish and sat down. All through the meal, the misunderstanding was on my mind. It clamored to be understood. How had it come about? Maybe I could have avoided it, and if so should certainly take care to avoid something similar in the future. The same unintended offence in a weightier situation might have had serious consequences. Had I been canvassing for votes in the area, for instance to be elected councilor, I would surely have had to do without the lady's vote and perhaps also those of her friends and neighbors. At a negotiating table it might have been the final straw: "So you don't like what we offer, eh? Very well!" and I would have been blamed for the walkout. Then the newspapers would have been full of it. Many of the

events which they report make no sense, unless someone somewhere along the line was misunderstood.

How avoid misunderstanding? Abbott and Costello came to my mind in a scene from some film of theirs where Abbott accuses Costello of causing unemployment on a vast scale by refusing mustard with his hot dog. This farce was spiced with at least a grain of Keynesian economics. There was the grain of something important right here, too, in this little misunderstanding. I let my mind wander back over the scene. All sorts of ideas paraded by as I sat there eating the fish which, incidentally, did not make exciting eating. What might I have done? Spoken about the weather or some other subject in the townsman's no man's land? Maybe. But to a farmer's wife? About the business? Would she have regarded that as inquisitive? How long would it have taken her to notice that I was trying to make conversation? Would that have made it any better?

My mind dwelled on the rapidly declining odds that now confronted anyone's attempt to make sense to anyone other than his wife and closest friends. What chance had I, a townsman from afar, college trained, widely travelled, now on holiday and writing an article for *Integrity*—what chance had I to say anything to the hostess here in the country, tired after a long day's work, which did not risk heavily to be misunderstood, to sound meaningless to her, or to put my foot into all sorts of pitfalls unwittingly. Maybe the man who complained that every time he opened his mouth he put his foot in it should not blame himself too much. Society does not protect him from that kind of hoof and mouth disease; it even conspires against him.

The problem. Here then is the paradox: that in the 1950's of cars and planes and radio-telephone networks, the world grows smaller but people seem to grow further apart. As geographical distance shrinks, social distance spreads. As it becomes physically easier to meet or to speak to people anywhere in the world, we have less to say or more difficulty "getting through" to them. In the growing towns, people who are more and more closely thrown together for work, to be neighbors, or just to get along come from many different backgrounds, know little or nothing about each other, and expect for the most part to have a very limited acquaintance, a sales call, for instance, or a "nice day" in passing. They stand side by side in the subway during rush

hour, squashed together and lonely. Many resent their friendless lives and fear, deep within themselves, that it may be they who are not capable of friendship.

No wonder then that so many people voice the same complaint: that they do not know what it is, but somehow nobody seems to understand them, often not even their families; that people seem to react in the most unexpected and unexplained fashion. No wonder so many people feel that they are without friends, that so many have given up trying to make some or set about it in such desperate and doomed ways. I remembered those who, having got hurt, withdrew and became lonely in the large crowd; those who, if they talk at all, steer clear of anything but the most trite and superficial; who make agreeable noises at cocktail parties; always smile; "yes men," afraid to risk anything to gain more; those who become restless, rootless, sick. I remembered the fact that one out of every ten children born in the United States will sooner or later during his life spend some time in mental institutions; that approximately one out of every three marriages of the past decade is ending in divorce; the many suicides; and most of all the uncounted numbers whose unhappiness could not be measured so simply, for them or for others near them.

It is all a part of the shifting and changing and moving about which seems to be characteristic of industrial society, part of the cost of cars and planes and towns. With so little shared, no common roots, no community now, it would be sanguine indeed to expect the meaning of words and deeds to be shared. Maybe I should have been more aware of that here just now.

Words with different meanings. It struck me as easy enough to forget. That was half the trouble. One could otherwise allow for it. Instances came to mind where the differences were evident and were normally allowed for. A Greek comes newly off the ship, for instance. He asks a newsboy for directions in his native tongue and of course he is not understood. The sounds he makes mean something to him but he speaks a different language. When an Englishman meets an American it is usually not long before each tries to hide his growing fun and/or consternation at the new meanings as well as sounds of his own language on the other's tongue. They use different words for the same things, many of them "nonsense," like the Englishman's "not bad" which is roughly equal to the American's "splendid." So here is

the same language. Only, as one wit has it, the Anglo-Saxon countries are separated by it.

Obviously the mention of money has a different ring to a beggar and a millionaire. Children and advertising copy writers are privileged to use words "inexactly"; and poets have a special license. These things we recognize easily, but more insidious are the differences which pass unnoticed, leaving us with the false impression we were talking of the same thing. "Perhaps," "bargain," "good," come quickly to mind as examples of the way we treat words as though they had a precise meaning of their own, although a little reflection suggests that they acquire real meaning from their contexts.

Contexts, I thought. The plural is appropriate, for there are two in every conversation. The speaker has certain experiences which give meaning to words for him, and the listener has others which largely determine what he hears.

Some pointers. The hostess smiled when I asked her for some more coffee. My thoughts were beginning to come to a full circle and I was anxious to review what I had learned. I was sure that, however difficult it had become to get to know people even slightly and to move on, with some, to sharing thoughts and activities, some things could help to make it easier. My mind returned to the pointers which had already occurred; others followed. Before long the list looked something like this:

1) Getting to know people and making friends, indeed, even small talk, is now often full of difficulties. The city is full of strangers who look and behave alike. To be aware of how little we share can help. It suggests greater circumspection and more practice at making contact. Many attempts will fail and many failures will remain unexplained. That is the situation. It is made more difficult still if I expect too much (and therefore become uncertain of myself) or too little (and therefore no longer try).

2) Past experience can help me prepare for meeting new people. But I must let it. I must allow myself (time) to reflect a little on my behavior both before and after the meeting. The picture will be tentative and I do not want to rely on it too much. But it will be something to start off with. There is room for thoughtfulness, too, about quite small things and some larger ones. Is it a good time and place for opening a conversation? What

difference, if any, does it make if I see him alone or together with others? Reflection will help me learn.

3) Words are not all that important. They can confuse as well as clarify. They are one means of communicating, and I understand them better if I do not separate them from the other means. For if I keep my eyes and ears open I have a chance to understand other people a little more before ever a word is spoken. I can observe their manner and what they are doing, their surroundings, and many other clues, of greater or lesser consequences, to their natures and to the context out of which they speak.

4) Listening to someone is more than just keeping quiet for a while, even more than just hearing. It means rather attending most carefully to what the person is trying to convey. What is the sense of it? What comes first to his mind, what is important to him? What does he omit? Can I help him say to his satisfaction what he wants to say but finds difficult? By asking questions I can check whether I understand him rightly. These things will help me to keep the *person* in the conversation, as well as the topic.

5) Keeping the other person in the conversation helps to keep myself in in the right way. Sometimes an experience with another person proves, on reflection, to have been sterile because I was killing time, going through the motions, putting in an appearance. Contact with others is more likely to be satisfying if it is genuinely a mutual experience, however fleeting, a slice of life, however small, that we share.

6) Helping him to get to know me and to understand what I mean is essential, too. As with him, much of this lies outside the realm of words. So far as speaking is concerned, I can help by starting with words that are descriptive ("fresh") rather than evaluative ("good") and by putting my words into a context through description, illustration, and examples. Maybe I can help him to feel free to ask questions as he needs to.

7) It takes time to develop an important relationship. It is worth-while taking it slowly. Not too much at a time.

My train of thought stopped there, many words beyond the ten that started it off. I paid my check. It was late. I asked the hostess whether she knew of a place nearby where I might stay the night. She did and was very ready to tell me about it and to give me detailed directions. I thanked her for more than she could know and went out into the night.

A Site for a Village

by NIALL BRENNAN

*Some reflections for those interested in
Christian communities, by the Australian
author of The Making of a Moron.*

IN 1834 John Batman, standing on a mudflat, declared: "This is the site for a village."

Over a hundred years after John Batman founded the city of Melbourne (Victoria, Australia) with this remark, a citizen of that city stood in the bush some 150 miles away and made a similar remark. The new situation was heavily timbered, with good red soil, well-watered, high up on a tableland, and a long way from anywhere. I am told that what impressed this later searcher for sites was the name of the district: the Land of the Holy Ghost. True, not many of the people knew it by that name; they knew it and the maps supported them by the name of "Whitlands."

The history of a community. Raymond Triado who established a community of Catholics at Whitlands is now about forty years of age, and a close friend of mine. His community began, in a stumbling way, just before the war. For many dreary months Triado lived alone; and in the Australian bush solitude can be real. As the war drifted to an end he was joined by others, and at the height of its numerical strength the population was (roughly) a dozen more or less permanent men; about six less permanent, that is to say, undecided men; two and at one time three married couples with babies; and about six single girls. In addition, there was a nebulous group known irreverently as the Whitlands "old boys" (or "alumni"), who lived away from Whitlands, were either sympathetic, unable to join for family reasons, or unwilling to spend more than short periods at the settlement. Some indeed were true "old boys"; having been once permanent they later left. Most of those who left in the early stages remained cordial, but some did not.

The rule of the community, so far as a fringe observer like

myself could see, was manual work, aimed at self-sufficiency, combined with the full liturgy of the Church, poverty, communal life for all except the married couples who lived in separate houses. There was a priest unofficially assigned to them from the Melbourne archdiocese, and every day Mass was said and the Divine Office was sung. Conditions of life were very hard. The "bathroom" was an open spring which froze in winter. Food was plain, often indigestible, and general sanitation was at a minimum. At 4,000 feet above sea level, snow often falls in winter. The scenery was magnificent, the country wild, the climate bracing.

Whitlands attracted a lot of attention, was visited by most bishops in Australia and attracted hordes of visitors. Their hospitality was the more commendable as every visitor interfered to some extent with the work on hand. The original slab hut occupied by the men was supplemented by houses for the couples, a chapel of logs which was a work of real architectural beauty, a house for the girls at a discreet distance, and various sheds.

Hostility and opposition. Many times between 1939 and 1949 the community was reported to be failing. And the exultation chiefly among Catholics at the possibility of failure was one of the most remarkable of the effects Whitlands produced on the Catholics of Australia. In general, Protestants and even unbelievers had some faint understanding of what the community was for: the restoration of holiness to normal life. Catholics on the other hand, if they knew nothing of the settlement apart from hearsay, were inclined to oppose it. It was accused not only of anti-clericalism, but of anti-Popery. It was accused of heresy, schism, irresponsibility, squalor and, in an oblique way, of too much boy-girl friendship. Slanderous lies about the community spread as far as London, where an Australian Catholic Actionist who had never been to Whitlands told me cheerfully that they were defying the Pope. The clergy in many cases were openly hostile. Among the rank and file of those who had heard that the poor were blessed, and the liturgy meant to be sung properly, a discreet neutrality was common.

The hostility to Whitlands, amounting as it did to statements which would be actionable in a court of law (where positive action is difficult, the angry man is apt to be imprudent with his words), was something every Catholic militant must expect. This is not to say that every eccentric who incurs the displeasure of the Church

is necessarily a saintly reformer. There are more eccentrics than saintly reformers, but the treatment meted out to them is much the same, because in the initial stages it is difficult to distinguish them. There were elements of both about the Whitlands community. Their eccentricities however were more accidental; the substance of the community was such, one would have thought, that some prayer might be offered for their success and guidance.

But the community was too much of a reproach. It was embarrassing. It embarrassed me, it embarrassed hundreds of others. It embarrassed a Franciscan friar who stayed overnight, asked where the hot showers were, and was referred to the creek with the ice blocks floating in it. It presented to the Catholics of Australia for the first time a standard of asceticism, faith and prayer which many found quite shocking. Too much of this sort of thing, one felt, and normal life would be interfered with. As Gladstone said, "Religion is all right if it does not interfere with a man's private life." Gladstone would have sympathized with the Catholic opposition to Whitlands.

The community changed. However, mistakes were made and frictions developed, and a few years ago the community underwent a radical change. From being a celibate community with conjugal appendages, the married state took over. Many left, some angry at the change. There is still a small community on the site. I have not been able to meet Triado since my return to Australia; we have corresponded, but two attempts to see him were frustrated by engine trouble. I suspect Satan of throwing a spanner into the works. Reports however tell of an orderly farming community, devoted to work, and their children. It is a substantial change. I do not see that Whitlands has necessarily "failed."

When the shape of the community changed, the contentment of many Catholics passed all bounds of decency. The final "failure" was an occasion of rejoicing, almost of gloating.

I was glad myself but for another reason; for it seemed that Whitlands, after a long period of trial and many errors, was finding its vocation. I am in no position to quote Triado's findings as a result of his experiments; but I can quote mine, and although we once disagreed, I think we are now almost fully agreed. I say that with reserve; but I married and he married, and now we both live somewhat similar, instead of divergent lives.

The desire to establish Christian communities is world-wide; and a roving scribbler like myself has to resist the temptation to descend upon some of these communities for an overnight stay, and then deliver judgment. Like a country which no visitor can begin to understand in less than a six-months stay, a Christian community has to be explored deeply before it can be discussed. I visited for an afternoon at the late Eric Gill's settlement in Piggotts, in Buckinghamshire; later stayed overnight at Gill's first settlement at Ditchling; spent an enjoyable afternoon with a group outside Detroit; have meant to explore the Tynong community in Victoria, not far from where I now live; have regretted not looking at the Taena community in west England; and have most regretted never seeing the Iona community of free-church people in Scotland.

Why have Christian communities failed? From examining these communities some points of interest emerge; and from things possibly coincidences perhaps rules may be drawn, provided they are not irrevocably drawn. It is of some interest to note that nearly all the Catholic communities begun in the last fifty years, in England and Australia, have been discontinued. There is evidence to suggest that if a person wants to start a community he is starting something which others have found very difficult. There is evidence that a *unity of faith is not enough* on which to found a community; communities of the faithless, founded for example on work, even on "art" like one eccentric group not far again from where I live, seem able to survive for longer than those groups united on prayer and fasting. Gill's Ditchling settlement began as a group of families who then worked together. The families have drifted apart, but the work remains and Ditchling is now more of a workshop than a group of families. Piggotts on the other hand is more of a family; not a group of families but one family.

I have formed certain opinions about communities which are only opinions but which will now govern the domestic attitude of my wife Elaine and myself to any community which tries to draw us into it. One must be careful of what one says, for often the opinion offered as a basis for discussion is seen as a dogmatic statement.

So cautiously proceeding: it should never be forgotten that *the family is itself a community*. Community means that place

where things are held in common. In society, the things which are rendered to Caesar are the common things, and there is really no intermediate group in nature between the family and society. It seems that a good deal of the trouble which religious communities of layfolk have experienced lies in their confusion of the two terms "community" and "society."

Family life and celibate life are different. So different that it would seem unnecessary to mention it. But it is necessary because it is almost impossible—certainly it is running counter to nature in such a way as to demand extreme care—to try and manipulate families into the kind of communal organization designed for celibates. If the family is to survive as a unit, it cannot surrender part of its essence to a group which deals in Caesar's affairs only; and a village, or a small group of families come together on the things to be rendered to Caesar. A society, be it small or large, cannot really be planned. It must grow, and its growth depends upon the natural need for it.

The communities of celibates grew up in an age of intense individualism. The world needed to be shown that men could live together in peace and order and prayer and without members of the opposite sex to console them. While the virginal life dedicated to God is still a higher calling, there is some ground for believing that in our age of growing state oppression and totalitarianism, it is the way of the individual which needs to be demonstrated and protected. The individual belongs to the community of the family, for the family is the only community where, by nature, all members are different and still individuals; different, that is, in sex and in age, but joined by a natural relationship to each other. It may be that our age is the age in which the Christian family needs not only protection but stimulus. The enormous growth of lay activity in the Church coupled with the admitted decline in the influence of the clergy seems to support this.

A family spreads out. A family is not only those joined by a natural relationship but can be held to include some others who, by accident, are without a home life of their own and who may, for want of a home, attach themselves even occasionally to such a home. Such people are the orphans of all ages, the single folk who work in cities and live in lodgings, often at a too-great distance from their own blood-relations. It is not difficult for any Catholic home to find many of these people whom it can help even

by such simple methods as an occasional invitation to share a home-cooked meal, or by assuring them of some place where in case of illness or trouble they may find the refuge that a home ought to be.

A home is ideally a center of worship, work, recreation and refuge. It is difficult for the average city home to be like this. Worship maybe, but both work and recreation are generally outside the home, and too often refuge is found by today's children in someone other than their parents. Some, like Elaine and myself, are blessed by the opportunity of moving out into the country where work is done at home, and where there is space, and natural resources for work, building, and expansion. In such a case (though planning must be resisted—the work of today must never be impeded by the thought of the morrow) one can imagine the organic growth of a society. We have the land but not the knowledge. Maybe a farmer has the knowledge but no land. He could live with us, build nearby, perhaps we could have a share-contract, eventually he would be self-supporting and a helpful neighbor. Another friend with similar ideas has the inclination. More land nearby is available for him. In time, we have a number of people living as neighbors, and a true society is forming. In this way a society does grow. It grows into what, in the nature of things, it ought to be. Thus it will have the strength to survive.

An exception. At Tynong, Victoria, there is a society of farmers grouped into a parish. Land was made available to them, but they work their own holdings as family units. They are united by co-operation where it is necessary for efficiency, and by the parish. I believe that it is working smoothly and efficiently. On "Kingajaniik," our property, we have too much land, too little knowledge of how to use it and too few hands to use it. Time will solve those problems, but already the parish priest (twelve miles away) leads a society which is more far-flung but almost, one presumes to say, as closeknit as that at Tynong. Tynong was blueprinted, and is an exception to my firm belief that a society cannot be planned far ahead. That it has succeeded so far is, I think, due to the fact that it was planned as a farming settlement project, rather than as a religious group.

Where does prayer come in? I do not wish to underestimate the value of the spiritual motive, the power of prayer, or the force which impels people to band together in praise of God.

What I think must be insisted upon is that a family's normal outlet for praising God is by its work; and that work is holy, often holier than that form of spirituality which leads to neglect, dirt, and disorder. In addition, family life does not lend itself willingly to a form of liturgy designed for celibates. At the hour for Compline, the baby is sure to wet his pants or the pig will escape. Where the father and mother are responsible not only for bringing up children of God but also for feeding them at a set hour, the spiritual life of a family has to be channelled into something appropriate to the life of the community. The solitary monks came together for prayer, and it may be that the busy family goes apart. A bold statement, perhaps, for some family prayer is necessary and if it can be said without creating disorder in the natural activity of the group, all the better.

The first and truest way of holiness for a working group is, I think, through the concept of order. Poverty to many people means squalor, and detachment from the world means plain hopelessly muddling. Satan stands for chaos, family life is essentially unpredictable and susceptible to disorder, and there is therefore a spirituality about order, cleanliness, beauty. A pot of paint can be as sure a means of prayer as a beribboned breviary. The slaughtering of a well-fattened pig for a feastday can be a new form of blood-offering. At the right times, and with the appropriate circumstances, the neighbors of the society can join together for work, perhaps more important for play, and certainly for prayer. Such is one form of Christian society: rooted in the family community.



Credit Unions & the Community

by MARY JEAN MCGRATH

One practical attempt toward the reestablishment of community.

All of us would like to see the Mystical Body as the community norm; would like to see the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man lived on a bread-and-butter level in everyday life.

We're willing—but what can we do, even in a small way, to make our brotherhood a reality, to build a genuine Christian community in an industrial society?

(Throughout this article, when we speak of the community, we are referring to the body of people having common organization or interests, not necessarily living in the same place. Most of us are members of a number of communities in this sense: the parish, neighborhood, the work group or professional group; in our co-ops or other organizations. In our industrial society these latter communities are often more important than the town or neighborhood type.)

The situation. It's a rare community where the Christian ideal of common work and integrated living can be carried out. The father is away each day, working for a wage at a fragmented job. He has no stake in the business, and often less in the community.

Each family, isolated with its own TV set, lives as a separate unit, with no vital bond between families in the most basic things of life. Of course we're all told, and know in the back of our minds that the entire economy is interdependent and we see how strikes in a particular industry affect us all, but this is not the same as realizing in our daily lives, as we feed and clothe and shelter our families, a real sense of community with the people next door, the people we work with, or the other members of the parish.

Today we're living in a money economy. The time when neighbors helped each other build their homes, when women got together for quilting bees, and farmers helped each other take in

the harvest are pretty much gone. Then, when we needed help, we borrowed labor; today we borrow money. In this money economy credit is an everyday necessity, yet few families can borrow money at low interest when they need it. Usury is still a big problem, even in this land of plenty.

Furthermore, family finances are much more complicated today. It's not enough to be frugal. Many a thrifty family finds itself desperate for money, caught in a mesh of economic circumstances over which it has no control, and with no place to turn for help, because in the big daily problems of money we lead separate lives. How much we earn, how we budget and spend it are "private" matters. It's each family against the world, often with a defensive pride, a "keeping up with the Jones" attitude about money.

Surely this is a far cry from the living of the Mystical Body in everyday life that is our goal. What can we do on a *community* level to meet family financial problems in a Christian manner?

The credit union is one answer. A credit union is a group of people who agree to save their money together, and to make loans to each other out of this fund, for good purposes, at low interest.

The important point for this discussion is, that a credit union always serves a *community*—a group with a common bond of association: people who work together, who live in the same neighborhood, belong to the same parish or club. Only members may save and borrow, so the credit union automatically strengthens the sense of community in the group.

Each member is an owner, and savings are actually shares in the credit union. Some credit unions also accept savings deposits. (In either case savings can be withdrawn, as from other financial institutions.) Thrift and regular saving are encouraged. As in other types of co-operatives, voting is by membership: one member, one vote.

Personal loans are made for any good purpose. Most common purposes of loans are to pay off debts, buy cars and household appliances, for doctor bills, and for emergencies, but credit union loans are made for any purpose that appears to be of benefit to the member.

After expenses are paid and necessary reserves set aside, any income remaining is returned to the members in the form of divi-

dends on their savings.

All credit unions are chartered and supervised by the government, but the members own and operate the credit union themselves. At their annual meeting they elect a board of directors, a credit committee and a supervisory or auditing committee. The directors elect officers from among their number to run the credit union. The credit committee of three members passes on all applications for loans, and the supervisory committee sees that the business is conducted in the proper manner, that accounts are in order and members' savings are protected. All officers and committeemen serve without pay except for the treasurer, who may be paid when the credit union business takes a good part or all of his time.

These are the mechanics of the credit union plan. Now let's analyze these operating principles to see how they can contribute to Christian community life.

Respect for the individual. The credit union is based on a respect for the sacredness and importance of the human person, and on awareness of the community's deep responsibility for the spiritual and material well being of each individual in the group.

So when the credit union lends money, the first consideration is "Will this loan help the member?" not "How much profit is in it?" And when considering security for a loan, the credit union first asks "What is the character of this borrower?" not "How much property does he own to pledge on this loan?"

In the credit union we are "brothers one of another": the man who must get money for his wife's operation, the father worried about how he'll make the payments on the washer, the mother wondering where she'll get the money for the children's shoes when school opens. The problems of one are the problems of the group. Burdens shared by our brothers are no longer burdens.

Democratic control of money. Because members own and operate the credit union themselves, they are forced to take complete responsibility for its affairs. They thereby gain control of their own finances. In a money economy this is essential to democracy, and the importance to the community is large.

When a member puts his savings in his own credit union, he puts them at the disposal of his fellow community members. If he saves in another institution, he is placing his money in the hands of others, to use as they see fit. In the credit union he makes

sure his money is at work for the direct benefit of others in the community. By the same token, instead of going to an outside agency, owned and controlled by others, when he wants money the member gets a loan from the credit union he owns.

True charity. Necessary to the development of true community spirit is an appreciation of what Christian charity is. Even many otherwise well-instructed Catholics confuse charity with almsgiving, or "good works," and all too often the givers and doers pride themselves on their "charity," while those on the receiving end resent the handout. Charity as brotherly love is lost somewhere along the way.

The credit union can contribute to a true understanding of charity as loving and treating all men as brothers because we are all children of God, and of the obligations that flow from this relationship.

The credit union believes that just because a man is broke, he doesn't automatically become dishonest. The worth of the individual and the bond of brotherhood speak louder than money. A loan and sympathetic, practical help in solving his financial problems most often put such a member back on his feet.

Other members, sometimes through their own moral weakness, have made a mess of their finances, and often of their family lives. The job of the credit union is not to sit in judgment, but to see if the person can be helped to solve his problem.

Naturally, the credit union is not a cure-all, and cannot take the place of the psychiatrist or the priest, but the fact is that many credit unions have gone far beyond the usual services of lending and financial counsel, often when no loan is involved at all.

But these are exceptional demands on a credit union. No doubt in the long run the greater service is rendered, the true expression of charity is in the day-to-day sharing of benefits and problems by members who are in the same boat with the rest of us: enough to live on, but not much to spare. Helping each other save, form habits of thrift, learning to budget and how to buy wisely, and making loans to each other at low cost for good purposes—all with mutual respect for our dignity as men—surely this is practical charity in everyday life.

Developing personal responsibility. Christianity is not "soft"; neither is the credit union idea. Credit union loans are made on a business basis. The member is expected to act in good

faith and to keep his word in repaying. Credit union experience of over one hundred years has shown that the average man is honest, and will pay his debts.

Each active individual member of the credit union thus enlarges his area of personal responsibility in the community group. For instance, if I borrow from my credit union I know that the savings of my friends and co-workers are being lent to me. This is the hard-earned money of people like myself. I feel not only a moral but a social obligation to repay it on time. It is more difficult for me to slide back on this obligation than if I owed the same amount to a faceless, impersonal business. This helps me accept responsibility for my own financial arrangements, and keep my word.

Dispelling false pride about money. The credit union helps dispel false, un-Christian pride about money. In the credit union money doesn't mean social status and prestige: it's something to be used for the common good. By the act of pooling his savings with other members, and by applying for a loan when he needs it to a committee he has helped to elect, members gradually learn a more open, direct and sincere attitude toward money.

In a very practical, down to earth way, the credit union member begins to see how his economic life is bound up with that of his neighbor; no longer can he believe in the fiction of self-sufficiency: "I stand on my own two feet" . . . "I don't owe any man a thing." In the credit union we see how, despite highly specialized work and mechanized economy, we do help each other on the daily level of financing a car, paying for a new baby, or meeting an emergency expense.

Voluntary service. Voluntary service is a cardinal principle of credit unions. As mentioned above, officers, directors and committeemen all serve without pay, except for the treasurer. Instead of hiring "experts" to run the credit union, the members call forth the leadership from their own ranks, because the credit union idea presumes that responsible, intelligent people can manage their own affairs, and that men have the capacity to develop far beyond their present abilities. "The people can do ten times what they think they can," Father Coady said, and this has been proved in the history of credit unions.

Not automatic. We have been talking about what the credit union can do and what some credit unions actually accom-

plish for their communities. But these goods do not automatically flow from the credit union plan. They depend on people who see the opportunities, the values implicit in the credit union idea, and who make them come to life.

It's a sad fact that many, many credit unions fall far short of the ideal: they're dormant, run pretty much like other businesses, or do not serve more than a fraction of their potential membership. As in other types of organizations, the character of a credit union is shaped by the vision of the men that make it up: narrow and petty in outlook and direction or far seeing, generous and service-minded.

Naturally credit unions alone will not revitalize a community, reform the economy and open the door to the good life. But "society need not be ground into the dust before the rebuilding is done" (Charles P. Bruehl, in *The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction*). Credit unions are a good way to begin this rebuilding right where we are today.

We all labor in different vineyards, but those of us who are concerned with the problem of fragmented living, with the need to realize the Mystical Body in everyday workaday life, could well give serious thought to devoting time and effort to credit unions within the communities in which we live—whether they be the factory, an office, a professional group, association or in our parishes.

The growth of credit unions in the last few years has been rapid, and there are now 19,500 credit unions with 9,000,000 members in North America, but the need is for many more.

The need. There is particular need for parish credit unions, because so many members of the parish may not be eligible to belong to any other credit union, or do not work with a large enough group to form a credit union where they're employed. There are 750 Catholic parish credit unions, and many of them are doing fine work, but the people need many times this number.

If you already belong to a credit union, or are eligible to join one, you can help to realize some of the values we have been discussing. The credit union is what the members make it: purely an economic convenience which a few of the group use, or a better way of life in the community, a living testimony of the Mystical Body of Christ—of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Communism, Community and Christ

by ALAN KEENAN, O.F.M.

*Because they have no sense of belonging,
some men have become Communists.
Has Communism satisfied their need?*

Throughout its history the human race has never ceased to dream of a utopian society to which all men belong and from which no man is barred. No class rivalry and no discord disturb the serenity of this society. Plato dreamed of it, so also did Robert Owen, John Locke and Karl Marx. The dream has yet to come to pass. But it expresses, perhaps, the individual's deep-seated longing for happiness related to the social order. The strength of the wish is, of course, indicated by its persistence; sad facts have never slain it.

In theory and apart from fact, men should be capable of unlimited evolution in social development. In theory Christianity should tame individual cupidity and cruelty. In theory all men should be rapt and caught by the vision. In fact the human race is full of intrinsic limitations. Above all it is free and the essence of social freedom is that some men can retreat while other men advance. In fact the original integrity of the race was lost by the original sin of its founders.

Facts are not seen like that in the cold logic of the mind of the planner. The planner could make the dream come true if he ignored the fact that men are limited and if he disregarded the fact that men are free. Now it is a matter of history that with the growth of applied science men no longer felt that they were bound by limitation. And it is the heart of the Communist Dialectic that no men are free.

The denial of freedom. Karl Marx wrote in the preface to his *Manifesto* that the political and intellectual history of any era was the necessary expression of its economic production and exchange. Instead of regarding a country's political economy as an expression of its way of life, he preferred to see its way of life as an expression of its economy. History was thus the product, not of the free actions of men, but of the calculable and inexorable

laws of profit and loss. Man, said Marx, brought nothing into the social world into which he was born. He was molded by his environment; and what he was, what he could be and what he would be were determined by the laws of exchange.

Society fell into two camps as a result, those who owned capital and those who were oppressed. Between the two was a class struggle. Capitalists aided by the State restricted the worker who thus had nothing to lose and everything to fight for. One day the accumulation of capital would disappear and the perfect community would come into being, a kingdom of heaven on earth in which no man gained yet no man lost; a society without ownership in which all were brothers and none were drones.

No organized body need agitate, said Marx, for the fulfillment of this dream. For the dream would come to pass inevitably by the Dialectic. The Dialectic Marx stole from a contemporary philosopher, Hegel. Hegel was an idealist who condemned matter no less than Marx despised Idealism. The two men stood at contrary poles of thought. For Hegel, the idealist, God immanent in men was not separate from them. For Marx, the materialist, man was God. The idealist saw only the workings of Divine Logic necessarily patterning the ideas of men. The materialist saw only the inexorable workings of matter according to the logic of Capital.

Two contraries often meet, and the creed of Marx that men were enslaved by matter was almost the creed of Hegel who saw them enslaved by the logic of God. Hegel said that the pattern of thought in man was such that when anyone advanced an idea, he soon discovered its opposite and the reconciliation of these opposing ideas signalled a progress in human thought. But this progress and this process were an expression of the thought of God. The Dialectic was the unchangeable pattern of the working of the mind of God among men. His followers applied the Dialectic to history; Marx and Engels applied it to economics.

The Dialectic. The Marxian Dialectic postulated that the fact of Capitalism must beget its contrary. Under Capitalism the workers were oppressed by the rich. Accordingly power would pass inevitably from the rich to the workers. They in turn would establish a dictatorship and this dictatorship would be vested in the State. The State, however, was to be only a temporary institution. In the final synthesis of the Dialectic the State would

with away. Private ownership would then have been destroyed and there would no longer be any reason for class struggle. In the absence of class struggle there would be no need for a State to defend the interests of the proletariat. Mankind redeemed from class would accordingly live as a perfect community.

This Dialectic is an unquestioned principle of Marx and the Communists, but the latter have never been faithful to the master's exposition of it. The Dialectic must operate, said Marx, in the same way at all times and in all places. Its working was predictable as the workings of any law of matter are predictable. But this is the logic of the planner and the unpredictable happened in life.

In the first place the democracies in which Economic Liberalism flourished began toward the end of the last century to correct their own most glaring abuses, not by going to the extreme of the Dialectic but by modifying through free legislation the iniquities of unrestricted private ownership. In the second place the revolution of the workers took place in the one country where the Dialectic indicated that it should not. If the revolution had occurred in Britain or if it had occurred in America the Dialectic would have been justified. Both of these countries were industrialized, both were Capitalist and both of them had their share of discontented workers. The prediction was in fact that Germany should be the country of revolution.

It was against all predictions that the revolution should take place in Russia. The Russian people were backward; the country was not industrialized; the workers were without true social consciousness; and the regime was not so much Capitalist as Imperial. Life was, however, larger than the cold logic of the planner.

Lenin in Russia. Of course, when the revolution did come in Russia the Dialectic was modified by Lenin. For Marx it was unnecessary that the proletariat should take an active part in bringing about the revolution. The revolution was guaranteed by the Dialectic which affirmed that the inner contradictions in Capitalism would inexorably bring about its downfall. But Lenin wrote in *Class, Society and the State* "that the liberation of the proletarian state from the bourgeois state is impossible without a violent revolution and without the destruction of the apparatus of state power created by the ruling class." Furthermore, Lenin had doubts that the Dialectic would really work. He never expressed

the doubts; he did not dare to. What he said was that the proletariat needed leadership from without. This leadership would be vested in a revolutionary vanguard called the Communist Party whose function it would be to arouse the class consciousness inbred in the workers by the Dialectic. When the workers had united and had discarded bourgeois tyranny the dictatorship of the proletariat should be vested in the Party.

Such oligarchy had never been considered by Marx. It was a deviation from the Dialectic and, of course, the more fanatical Marxians saw it as such and were liquidated for their protests. Having thus established power in the hands of a chosen few, Lenin's next task was to give the Party permanence. The Party as the vanguard of revolution and as the instrument of the proletariat should in theory have been impermanent. According to the Dialectic it should have withered away in the final synthesis of the formation of the classless kingdom of man. What Lenin did was to reiterate the dogma of the "inevitable withering away of the worker's state" but he also emphasized the protracted nature of the process; its dependence upon the development of the "higher" phase of Communism; and he insisted that one must leave on one side the question of length of time, and the question of concrete forms of the withering away. By this tour de force Lenin interpreted the master's doctrines in such a way that power would be vested indefinitely in the hands of the chosen few.

The ruthlessness of the Party in ensuring its authority we know from Arthur Koestler; its cloak and dagger methods are clear from the case of the Pumpkin papers; and its final form has been prophetically described by George Orwell in "1984." One thing is quite clear. Communism is not Marxism. The Dialectic does not work. It is not inexorable; it is not predictable; it can be changed; it can be falsified. It is in effect no more than a piece of age old Gnostic heresy disguised in Marxian words. Above all, when the Communist uses the Dialectic he does so dishonestly. His thought is like the knight's move in chess. The question is why it should be so successful.

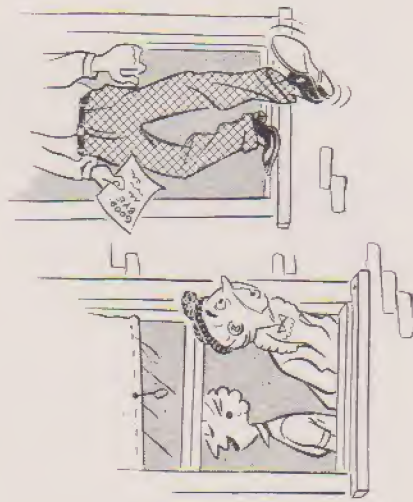
Communism and religion. Part of the answer is that it gives a faith to men who have none. God has placed in us a need for Himself and a need to belong to each other in Him. Communism came upon a world whose religious beliefs had been sorely tried by the progress of Scientific Materialism. It offered no con-

firmation to that world that there was no God, it simply offered a new faith to those who had tired of the old. Its intrinsic interest to men lay in its deification of man and in its creation of a mystique without an Infinite Being. "If man has not the religion of Jesus," wrote the poet Blake, "he will have the religion of Satan."

And since religion is social as well as personal it is possible to see how Communism offered a sense of belonging to bewildered sheep who were starving on the pastures made barren by science.

Bishop Sheen has drawn attention to the pseudo-religious character of Communism with its substitution of the materialistic Dialectic for the spiritual providence of God; with its canon of Scriptures in the writings of Marx; its Church in the person of the Party and its redemption by the blood of the proletariat. It offers Paradise upon earth and a cloudy Brotherhood of Man, a promised land which somehow escaped from the Jewish racial consciousness of Marx. He could not evade the dream of his race that the kingdom would one day come on earth.

False though the creed may be, its growth and spread is a reproach to the Christian conscience. If the West had given to the East the charity which Christ bequeathed them, Asia might not be Red today. The Brotherhood of Man should have meant everything to Christians who were made children of the Heavenly Father through Christ.



"In this building, Mother, everyone minds their own business."

Communism and the Apostles. The brotherhood of those men who were called by Christ to be His Apostles rested on their obligatory life in common. They renounced everything that they possessed. All of them obeyed the categorical rule of leaving all things to follow Christ. "Lord," said Peter proudly, "we have left all things and followed thee." It was a communism of which Marx could have been envious and from which he might have drawn a lesson. Total as their communism was, the Apostles during the lifetime of Our Lord were not always free from strife. The Sons of Thunder were bourgeois in their desire for the chief thrones in the kingdom.

Their evangelical communism was, of course, directed to a religious end. And this end was that of preaching the gospel. In fulfilling their mission, moreover, the Apostles could and did depend upon the hospitality of their countrymen. Such hospitality in the Palestinian culture of that time was readily given to travellers so that their environment made their communism possible. However, the cardinal point is that the communism demanded by Christ of His Apostles was only really possible because of the assistance given to them by those who owned private property.

Our Lord proposed evangelical communism to those whom He called to follow Him. He obliged only His Apostles and His disciples. It is true that he condemned riches; it is true that He said that the rich man needed the help of God to bring about his salvation; but it was not the possession of wealth which was wrong, rather it was the dangers of being wealthy that Our Lord had in mind. The certain rich man who amassed wealth into his barns was not condemned for his wealth but for his forgetfulness of God in amassing it. The sin of the rich man, in other words, was to forget that he was the steward of the goods of God. Zacheus, a rich publican, was, nevertheless, a true son of Abraham, for the use of money is not bad; it is its abuse which leads the rich man to be buried in hell.

At some time or other Socialists have endeavored to maintain that Christianity is in its beginnings a kind of Socialism. The truth is that *everything which is best in Socialism* with reference to care of the poor and amelioration of the needy is *Christian*. Christianity does not need to justify itself to Socialism; rather what is best in Socialism is justified by Christianity. The evidence of the early Church seems to show in addition that real community is not

built upon communism of property but on communism of spirit. **The Jerusalem experiment.** The bonds of the early apostolic community in Jerusalem were extremely strong. With touching faith the new converts sold their possessions and laid their price at the feet of the Apostles. "All they that believed were together and had all things in common. Their possessions and goods they sold and divided them all, according as everyone had need."

The picture is idyllic in many ways. We see a community united in heart and mind; but it is a *local* community that we see and not the whole Church. We do not see a movement which is inspired directly by the preaching of the Apostles. We do not find any record of their imposing this way of life on any convert. If Ananias was condemned it was for lying to the Holy Spirit. St. Peter makes it abundantly clear that he recognizes Capital when he speaks in these terms to Ananias—"Whilst it (the property) remained did it not remain to thee?" (recognition of the right of private ownership). "After it was sold was it not in thy power?" (recognition of Capital).

The Apostles in their preaching and in their writings obliged no one to evangelical poverty. It was and is a counsel of evangelical perfection. Their attitude is well summed up by St. Paul who bids Timothy: Charge the rich of this world not to be highminded nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches but in the living God (Who giveth us all things to enjoy): to do good; to be rich in good works; to give easily; to communicate to others.

Communicating to others. A community may be held together extrinsically or intrinsically. If its bonds of union are only those imposed on it by space; or not more than those imposed by common observance of law and custom; or not more than the bond which unites employees to their masters, then it is not a community with a heart. To that community men could hardly be said to belong. It has a unity which is imposed from without, but there is nothing about the community within to enrich its members. It is a group of individuals bound by the accident of houses on a lot or work together in a factory.

But if the bonds of community approximate to the bonds which exist in a family; if such a community has common ideals to vivify it, then it is a community with a heart. Because they have no sense of belonging, no sense of common ideals to work for and

no common faith to enflame them, some men leave heartless communities and join the Communist Party. All these things they hope to find in some degree in the Party. The tragedy is that they ought to have found their needs satisfied in Christian society. For a wholly Christian society is not only a community with a heart, it is a community with a soul.

In such a community rich men are not measured by their bank balances but by their ability to communicate themselves to their fellows in charity. They are members one of another in that community which is founded by Christ and called His Mystical Body. In that Body there is neither black nor white, rich nor poor, bond nor free. They who belong to it are those whom Christ sees as He looks at the world which has accepted His Redemption. They are those whom His Spirit informs so that they with Him form one Body, Whose soul is the Spirit of God. Whatever they do one to another they do to Christ, for He is present by grace in each of them and none of them are strangers in His Sacred Heart.

They are men as He wants men to be, as God willed them to be until Adam, like Marx, desired to be a god and not a man; until Cain slew Abel over property and thus made a parable that the race had lost its primitive integrity, and that the hand of a man flies to his brother's throat until he is redeemed by Christ.

Book Reviews

THE CHURCH: A DIVINE MYSTERY
by Abbe Roger Hasseveldt
Fides, \$4.50

One of the great scandals of the modern Church (as opposed to the medieval) has been the tribalism and sectarianism of certain Catholic elements. We have had Irish Catholics and French Catholics, German Catholics and American Catholics, but the *catholic* Catholic, with an adequate notion of the unity of mankind, a practical understanding of the universal nature and mission of the Church, is a rare bird. No small part of the initial strength of the Communist movement derived from its original supernatural character. No small part of the treason so common in our time derived from the human need for a loyalty larger than nationalism. The Communists supplied a false answer to that need at the very time when Catholics were preaching nationalism in the name of the Universal Church. Stalin's betrayal of the universal principle in Communism, while it has enhanced the Russian Em-

pire, has weakened the universal appeal of Communist doctrine, and gives to the Catholic a new opportunity to shed his recent provincialism and assume once more the universal mission of the Church. For that reason I am particularly grateful for this excellent summary of the somewhat neglected science of ecclesiology. This is the fullest and richest study of the Church that I have seen. Although the book itself is only 263 pages the table of contents is *five pages*—which should indicate the concentration of the matter. The work has been widely used as a textbook in the seminaries in France, so that there can be little question of its authority. Indeed there is not—there could not be—any novelty in doctrine: the strength is in the clarification and emphasis of doctrine that is as old as the Church itself. There is also evidence that the author is acutely aware of the existential world to which the doctrine must be applied.

To complete this necessarily short review I think I can do no better than add some brief excerpts:

"God is a *Communio* of Persons within the unity of a single Life. . . . *The Church*, as the image of the Trinity, is a *communio* of persons within the unity of Christ."

"Only the Church can resolve the antinomy of the two great contemporary currents of thought: (a) the *communitarian* current (which in Communism ends up by despising the person); (b) the *individualistic* current (represented, in its most extreme form, by Existentialism). For the Church is a communion of persons, not anonymous individuals, nor mere numbers in a series; and because of this fact, the Church can take to itself whatever may be of value in the present personalist current of thought. But these persons are in *communio* and can only develop through love and mutual service; and from this point of view, the Church can take to itself whatever is of value in the communitarian current."

—J. E. P. BUTLER

THE AGE OF CONFORMITY
by Alan Valentine
Regnery, \$3.00

Recently I read in the *Saturday Review* an interview by Cleveland Amory with Henry Regnery, the publisher of this book. Mr. Regnery was sought out because he is a publisher of controversial books at considerable personal loss. Mr. Regnery was quoted as saying that he was proud of publishing Mr. Valentine. My acquaintance with Mr. Regnery's books dates from *The Failure of Technology* through *The Conservative Mind*. These two books are worthy of high praise.

All of which leads up to the fact that I found Mr. Valentine's book disappointing. For an audience of Catholics, readers of *Integrity*, who should be fairly well-informed about what is wrong with America, the book is only a collection of generalities about how the time is out of joint. For one not so well-informed in social criticism, the book may serve as a summa of the genre. It is very well-written and has the energy of anger.

Mr. Valentine deals with the failures in politics, education and religion. I should say some religions. There should be a law that writers using the word "church" should be specific as to what church or churches they mean.

He refers to "the voluntary daily self-expression of citizens through countless spoken, printed and recorded media." He mentions "the strident popular voice" and concludes that because popular sovereignty and cultural decline came together that one caused the other. This sounds too much like some European critics and the "customer is boss" theory. I believe rather in searching for the centers of power in communication that manipulate the masses and then say that the people have spoken.

Mr. Valentine's strictures against education are mainly true: "Our schools and colleges are . . . more successful in servicing society than in improving it." He makes a good point when he says: "Educators, who should have claimed the authority in their profession that doctors and lawyers assert in theirs, weakened by their acquiescence their own prestige and self-respect."

For a non-Catholic humanist approach this book has many good things. To the informed Catholic it must appear regrettably superficial.

—JOHN C. HICKS

THE MOUSE HUNTER
by Lucile Hasley
Sheed & Ward, \$2.75

Sending in the review of a book published in 1953 over a year late is the most public confession of faults I can think of at the moment. However, I offer excuses on the basis of the sheer readability of the book, its great charm and, obviously, its unique Hasley humor. How could I yank it back from the non-Catholic faction among my friends when they were so obviously enjoying it and passing it around among themselves? This is the kind of propagation of the faith that is Mrs. Hasley's specialty and I couldn't let an overdue review interfere with *this*. Then, finally getting it back, in a weak moment I let it go again to the Catholic faction among my friends and it did enormous good here. The shrieks were heard down in Monson. Gaity is something no one can get enough of and there is no one like L. H. to remind serious Christians that they must not take themselves too seriously.

Her humor is irresistible and she packs the nastiest theological wallop when you're least expecting it. Let no one labor under the delusion that Lucile Hasley is the Church's Milton Berle. She is that rare creature whose completely American sense of humor is redeemed from becoming an end in itself by the very fact that knowing God makes all of us and our foibles, and herself and hers, not a little ridiculous. The group of short stories at the end of the book is proof of the fact that her writing can be as well beautiful, sensitive prose and that Lucile knows there is a time to laugh and a time to be serious. If this review, late as it is, will remind those who meant to read this book that so far they have not, it will serve a good purpose.—MARY REED NEWLAND

THE WESTERN FATHERS
translated & edited by F. J. Hoare
Sheed & Ward, \$4.00
THE ANGLO-SAXON MISSIONARIES
IN GERMANY
translated & edited by C. H. Talbot
Sheed & Ward, \$3.50

With these two volumes Sheed & Ward has launched an ambitious project designed to make available, in new translations and reinforced by modern scholarship, a library of little-known or poorly-known Christian biographical works. Under the general editorship of Christopher Dawson, the series is called "The Makers of Christendom" and its first offerings are visually handsome. Yet without wishing to quarrel with the series' basic proposal: to make up for the fact that "the lives of the saints still remain an unknown or unappreciated literature, and we are cut off from them by a curtain of pious platitudes"—a large question remains. It is whether the documents in these first two books are in themselves worth resurrecting and, if they are or even if they aren't, whether the job has been done well. My own opinion (tentatively) is that they have only a limited interest and hence are not worth so grand a publishing effort, and (firmly) that the presentation of them has not been done well.

To begin with, the lives (of SS. Martin of Tours, Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo, Honoratus of Arles, and Germanus of Auxerre in the first volume; SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, Lebuin and Willibald in the second) written as they were by contemporaries who possessed neither literary nor biographical skill, are inherently tedious. With the exception of an interesting account of an eighth-century pilgrimage to Jerusalem by St. Willibald and some sharp-edged letters by St. Boniface, they are tales about obscure saints which bring them no closer to us or about prominent ones which add little to what we already know.

Going deeper, it may be that the lives and careers of most of these early saints, immensely valuable as they were for the Church's development, lack an inner communicability on the natural level and are cut off permanently from our imaginations though not of course from union with us in the Mystical Body. With the exception of Augustine and possibly Ambrose and Boniface, they were perhaps not really *Fathers* in the way the Eastern saints were; that is, they produced neither a body of teaching nor a way of religious life nor a sharply appealing mode of sanctity by which to know them. They were for the most part preservers and exponents of the faith and they did their work with a single-minded zeal which forced their chroniclers into hyperbole in order to make that work known. If one says that this probably suited the times but that it lacks the right note for our modern ear, must one add that this is in no way a criticism on the moral or spiritual level?

Whether or not all this is so, what *is* true is that the editors themselves seem not to be overly impressed with the documents in hand. At regular intervals they apologize—for the style, the lack of insight, the factual errors, the sentimentality, the exaggeration—so frequently that one

comes to wonder why the work was undertaken. If the point is the "value as legend," then why the maddeningly irrelevant footnotes which have the effect of professorial wet blankets on whatever flames of simplicity the originals might have had. And if it is simply to fill a gap, one can only say that a better way to do it might be for someone (like Mr. Dawson) working from the originals to write a book about these saints with soberness and insight and unsentimentality and accuracy. Sometimes history's truest voice is not a contemporary one.

One last word. I imagine that scholars at least will find these books worth going through. And I hope that the next volumes in the series (Joinville's life of St. Louis is promised for the spring) come closer to fulfilling the high expectations with which I for one greeted these.

—RICHARD GILMAN

BLACK BANNERS
by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn
Caxton, \$4.00

This is an angry and often bitter book born of the author's indignation. Ostensibly the story of a decent man's reaction to the stupidity and brutality

of a godless twentieth-century world at war, it is in reality an impassioned politico-religious treatise stretched on a relatively thin framework of plot.

The black banners of death fly alongside the swastika in this narrative of an Austrian border town in 1944. All the disillusionment and despair of its inhabitants are personified in a young nobleman whose soul is tormented by the moral disintegration he sees everywhere in the world. Under the very nose of the nazi Gestapo he engages in dangerous resistance activities, but his motives are a strange mixture of contempt and moral indignation.

Now and then this main character comes through as a sympathetic human being fighting against engulfment by decay and bestiality, but more often the author's heavy hand makes him a mere mouthpiece for a service of bitter indictments. There are some highly perceptive observations on religion, nationalism, the aristocracy, the order in Europe, and the new order in America. Many of these thoughts have undeniable weight, others are bound to be controversial. All are provocative.

There is a deep sense of sin running through the book, giving it a strong if not always orthodox spiritual tone. The horribly grotesque and—perhaps most damning of all—senseless evil that man perpetrates against his fellows is seen through the tortured soul of the central character—when he comes to life. At other times the character is only lightly sketched in, and the author climbs into the pulpit with sermon in hand.

It is precisely this heavy-handed moralizing that makes the book less successful as a novel than as an important essay on contemporary mores. In a day when criticism of America by Europeans is dismissed as sour grapes, and concurrence by Americans in such criticism is considered tantamount to treason, this book will raise a storm of controversy. If it succeeds in doing only that, it will have had good effect.

—WILLIAM T. DARDEN

FATHER McNABB READER
edited by Francis Edward Nugent
Kenedy, \$3.50

Even though editor Nugent could not possibly include in one small volume all the selections that a consensus of Father Vincent McNabb's enthusiasts would recommend, they will be pleased with this book. This *Reader* fairly, if not copiously, represents the renowned Dominican's versatility as a writer and ability as a thinker. Clearly illustrating that Father McNabb was a formidable social prophet, poet, essayist and teacher, the book finally suggests—and this is the point of origin of all those brilliant rays—that he was what his friends knew him to be: a saintly man who sought, loved and taught the truth.

The book gets off to a good start with "A Call to Contemplatives," an excerpt containing one of Father McNabb's most provocative theses: the future of the Church is on the land. That the Babylonians of the world are biological graveyards and spiritual hazards is a theme this recent English writer touches upon several times in this *Reader*.

At the center of his social criticism is the priest's concern for good family life. His lament on "The Passing of Children's Games" ("We have largely confused games, which children must re-create as they play, with toys, which children merely use to enjoy.") should certainly be studied by today's parents. Also of interest to parents are such selections as "The Children's Catechism" (a commentary on its literary and philosophical excellence), "Rights of the Parent" (containing a timely warning against state encroachment), "Nazareth Measures" (an open letter to the new Prime Minister), and "The Creator Child" (a meditation on a children's handwork exhibition). Legislators, teachers, social workers and clerics as well as parents may gain much from Father McNabb.

His writings are so genuine, so lacking in pretense and sham, so full of humility and frankness, that we are not surprised that he appreciated those qualities in others. The three biographical sketches in the second section of this volume give evidence of this. In the first, in prose that is often lyrical Father McNabb contrasts Francis Thompson with Milton and Shelley. The second, on G. K. Chesterton, is also excellent. In so many ways they were kindred spirits, yet Father McNabb insists that Chesterton stands alone. The third biography is a panegyric on the founder of the Order of Preachers. That he himself exemplified the Dominican ideal would seem to qualify Father McNabb to write on St. Dominic. The sketch here is disappointing in only one respect: it is too brief.

The third of the five sections of this book reminds us that Father McNabb the poet is not so well known as Father McNabb the essayist. The five poems—particularly "*Non Niri Te, Domine*"—in this *Reader* leave us wishing for more.

Some of Father McNabb's best theological writing is found in this book, especially in the essay "The Scruple of Doubt" and in those essays and conferences dealing with confession and with prayer. His observation that "For safeguarding liberty and democracy the ballot box is not so ef-

fective as the confessional box," is but one of his many inspired insights into the Sacrament of Penance. His writings on prayer are likewise absorbing—very reasonable, sympathetic, practical—as he treats the place of prayer in our life, some hindrances to prayer, the need for perseverance in prayer, and the "easiness" of prayer. In addition, the theme of his poem *Rosa Patientiae*—joy and suffering go together—is well developed in several of his conferences.

To remark that this collection is not long enough is to offer not so much criticism of the editor as a compliment to the author.

—BRENDAN O'GRADY

SAINT ANTHONY OF THE DESERT
by Henri Queffelec
translated by James Whitall
Dutton, \$3.75

In the third century Rome passed through a period of disorder and collapse. The purple was booty for adventurers, economic evils led to near bankruptcy, and citizenship, once a prized reward, became a despised burden. Like Gibbon centuries later, many Romans blamed the disorder on the rapid growth of Christianity. The Christians, on the other hand, took a divided attitude toward the empire. Some insisted that the empire was the embodiment of evil from which all Christians should dissociate themselves. Others were willing to accept the humanistic virtues embodied in Roman civilization, insisting however that even these virtues could be saved only by being based on the higher virtues of Christianity.

It was in the midst of this crisis that St. Anthony lived his answer to the problem, and earned the title of "Father of monasticism." He rejected social obligations by his life of chastity and poverty, and completed these beginnings by rigorous fasts and other ascetic practices. To the charge that this was anti-social and masochistic, later monks would reply that it was in imitation of the Apostles. St. Anthony rejected social life in order to possess a greater life, for which he would battle the Devil himself. Such action is heroic, but then, saints are by definition those who are truly heroic—so heroic that their admirers easily forget that they are also men. Such a problem is especially acute in the case of St. Anthony, since his asceticism and struggles with the Devil are almost completely unintelligible to our society.

Queffelec wrote his biography of St. Anthony to present the human qualities of a seemingly super-human man. He has studied the source material well, and when the sources omitted details which would endear St. Anthony to us, Queffelec has conjectured what these details might be. Unfortunately he has succeeded too well. To understand St. Anthony one must also understand the social and theological problems of the late empire, asceticism as a means to sanctification, the contest with the Devil. While the author has touched on all these aspects, he has not probed them sufficiently to make St. Anthony intelligible, not just as a man, but as a great and heroic saint.—HUGH FALLON

MARTIN DE PORRES, HERO
by Claire Huchet Bishop
Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50

This book is the third in Claire Huchet Bishop's series on the lives of the saints. To one whose knowledge of Blessed Martin had been confined to the tale of his friendship for mice, this story of his life came as a happy surprise.

Lima, Peru where Martin was born was a city of contrasts. There were the hated Spanish conquerors, living in gold houses, on gold-paved streets, wearing gold-threaded clothes. There were the proud Indians whom the Spanish had brought to poverty and squalor. There were the Negro slaves, imported to work in the mines. Martin's mother was a Negro; his father, a Spanish nobleman who had deserted the family. He was hungry much of the time; yet on the rare occasions when his mother did have money to give him to buy food, he would give it away to those he considered poorer than himself—in spite of the beatings his mother inflicted on him. This love for the poor took precedence over everything throughout his life.

As a Dominican lay brother Martin thought of everything: he planted a common orchard for poor children; with a friend he established a dowry fund for the marriage of poor girls; he started the first free clinic in the New World at his mother's house after his superiors objected to the long line of needy at the convent; to care for the many homeless boys and girls, he opened a home staffed by teachers and nurse, the first of its kind. He was counselor and adviser to poor and rich; indeed at his deathbed he was attended not only by a crowd of poor people, but also by important dignitaries like the Archbishop and Viceroy. Martin had the gifts of ubiquity and telepathy.

Mrs. Bishop presents her material so deftly that Martin comes to life for us. She shows him as a typical American in his way of getting things done quickly and efficiently—though he never gave the impression of being in a hurry. This book might be read aloud to children in the primary grades, but it is especially suitable for children in the upper grades and junior high. In these days of shallow supermen of the comic book variety, here is a real hero to inspire our children.

The halftone drawings by Jean Charlot are delightful.

—MATHILDE J. NOLTE

WE AND OUR CHILDREN
by Mary Reed Newland
Kenedy, \$3.50

"... and her delight was to be among the children of men." This is Mary Reed Newland's delight. She has joy in her children; she nurtures them and refurbishes them, inside and out, teaching them the love of God through all the things they do from cradle to school-bus days. *We and Our Children* is a good piece of clear thinking and vivid experience from the lives of the Newland family. It blueprints the way to the only security there is, that of being secure in God. *Molding the Child in Christian Living* is the sub-title of the book, and the book is a precise mold for just this.

At first it is overwhelming to find a contemporary (the Newlands were married in 1943 as were we) so advanced in wisdom, so apparently mellowed, so ready with apt solutions for the ordinary and extraordinary battles of the day. Of course, the Newlands have seven children to our three, which puts them that much ahead of the game in patience and endurance alone. But I am thinking of the impact this book will make on the families who will read our copy. Some will wish they had had it ten years ago. And some will roar that *their* children are not that tractable. Yet I will back up Mrs. Newland all the way, as I have already worked into our children's routine several of her unusual and sound practices on prayer and on behavior problems, in particular, with glowing results. (I get the most glow.)

I like all her suggestions on prayer life for the children. Picture the delight of announcing the joyful and glorious mysteries of the Rosary through charades. And the custom of keeping the anniversary of baptismal days, the child solemnly renewing his baptismal vows in the bosom of his family before he feasts and opens presents. There are lots of nice practical ideas in this book on home equipment for creative activity, from kindergarten to junior grades. There are concrete suggestions for helping even small children, pre-Communion age, prepare for Sunday Mass. Try it. The results are warmly rewarding. Parents as well as children grow in Christ as the work on the inner man progresses.

I like particularly her explanations of the Mass. For those of us who had released-time instructions at public school and not much more, it is good reference material. Her chapter on purity is very helpful; it is direct and gentle handling of awkward material. The most convincing point is that Mary Reed Newland makes throughout the book is that we can and must reach the children when they are still little that heaven *is* attainable, and that they *will* be saints.

The table of contents is thorough; the titles are intriguing; the book stimulating and unique. It belongs in the home as much as the kitchen table, the stove and the cradle for raising saints for God.

—KATE DONAGHY

Book Notes

Combining the works of the three great medieval Doctors, St. Thomas, St. Albert, and St. Bonaventure, Father Augustine Rock, O.P. (*Unleash Thyself Be Sent*, Brown, \$3.50) has cast their doctrine into a formal theological treatise on preaching and the office of preacher in the Church of Christ. This is probably the first strictly theological work on the subject that has ever been written and Father Rock is to be congratulated for this pioneer effort. The volume would make an excellent gift for a priest or seminarian.—J.V.C.

For those who would like to take a refreshing dip into a Catholic mind, Regnery has re-published Hilaire Belloc's *Path to Rome* (\$3.75).

The reader is afforded the opportunity of picking Belloc's brains on every conceivable subject while he plods his pilgrimage across every mountain and valley between Toul and Rome. As was his wont, Hilaire behaves with unpretentious abandon. In as many pages he joins some soldiers in their revels, draws a sketch of a cathedral, skirts a mountain, curses some inhospitable villagers, carefully documents five natural reasons for attending daily Mass, misses Mass, and makes some inquiries about local anti-Semitism. Belloc is one of the few Catholic writers who doesn't give a hang what you think of *him*. He leaves with you the lasting feeling that you have been in the company of a man. A unique accomplishment.—ED WILLOCK

Cracks in the Cloister, by Brother Cholerick (Sheed & Ward, \$2.50), is a book composed wholly of well-executed cartoons about the inmates of monasteries and nunneries. It should especially appeal to Catholics who have a first-hand or second-hand experience with the uncomplicated peccadillos which plague the lives of the religiously dedicated. Some people (with whom I have no sympathy) will find this book irrelevant. I think especially of the best cartoon: that of an ancient and horrible monk shouting, "Who pinched my relic of the Little Flower?" The object of this work is obviously to amuse but not to edify. I enjoyed it thoroughly.—ED WILLOCK

God and the Supernatural, edited by Fr. Cuthbert, O.F.M., Cap. (Sheed & Ward, \$3.00), is "a Catholic statement of the Christian faith." Since this welcome reprint is primarily for non-Catholics, the authors have entirely avoided the use of theological terminology, which gives a rather odd quality to the text for those accustomed to Catholic reading on similar subjects. But it is precisely this which the non-Catholic will find most helpful, and his only difficulty in this volume might be in coping with the high level of intellect and erudition displayed by the distinguished contributors. As a refresher course in apologetics for the Catholic who comes into contact with inquirers, and perhaps adversaries, this book could hardly be bettered.—JANET KNIGHT

The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde (Kenedy, \$2.00) is a children's book with an unobtrusive moral, delightfully illustrated by Mary Fidelis Todd.—D.D.

The third volume in the set of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Truth* has been published by Regnery (\$7.50 per volume). Needless to say the fact that notice of these volumes is relegated to a book note is no reflection on their worth; merely an indication that they surpass anything that could be said about them in a review. We are indebted to the publisher for making them available to us.—D.D.

The life of Father John Drumgoole (*Children's Shepherd* by Katherine Burton, Kenedy, \$3.75) is truly an inspiration. His pioneering in caring for the fatherless has laid a foundation so needed today when the disrupted family has become a commonplace occurrence. Unfortunately this particular biography lacks drama and virility.—HUGH SHORT

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